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NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS



SANCTUARY—HOW THE CHURCH MILITANT HELPED IN THE WAR OF THE REVOLUTION IN CHINA

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"Your swords into ploughshares, and your spears into pruninghooks."

CHINA is said to do everything in the opposite way, and she certainly reversed the above order on Tuesday, October 10, 1911, when she plunged herself into a fierce civil war, brother against brother, and son against father. The ploughshare and pruninghook she certainly understood, and with them could make a living out of the most hopelessly barren soil and frequently out of a patch of soil that seemed to be no bigger than a pocket handkerchief. The sword and the spear had become almost relics and she had settled down into a humdrum acquiescence to fate that was fast approaching drowsiness if not sleep; but children wake early and Young China awoke one morning, grasped the sword and spear, cleaned house, and cut down at the door the weeds that were choking the nation out of existence. The stolid expressionless faces and emotionless voices are no more. China is to-day a land of living, alert, thinking, impassioned men, alive to the needs, the necessity, and the good of their country, and ready to serve her day and night without ceasing, and to die for her if need be.

After the taking of Wuchang by the Revolutionists, the first actual battle was on the arrival of the Imperialist troops at Hankow, October 18, St. Luke's Day. As we came out of church, the familiar gun-fire met our ears, and we were soon called to care for those who had fallen. How enthusiastic and earnest and happy they were, and how they loved their guns, taking them to bed as children do their toys at Christmas time and giving them up only under severe protest! One poor fellow, whose arm was badly shattered, groaned as piece after piece of bone was taken out, "Oh, how it hurts, oh, how it hurts; but never mind, we won!" Some of these boys were only sixteen years old and many had been soldiers less than forty-eight hours.

After a week or more of continuous fighting, every available spot was taken for hospital needs, the post office, large tea hong, and finally our own cathedral. The cathedral, strange to say, went into use as a

hospital October 28, a great mission day. That was a dreadful day, the foreign women and children—nurses, doctors, and hospital helpers excepted—had been ordered on board the gunboat *Helena*, and most of the servants had gone on board a hulk provided for the purpose. The noise of cannon and the crash of firearms filled the air continually, and the peaceful little courtyard outside the cathedral echoed to the groans of the wounded and the footsteps of their bearers. Shells whizzed over our heads and burst in our immediate neighborhood constantly, but the puzzle as to where to get materials with which to work was dominant over everything, and the effort to check persistent hemorrhage overshadowed the thought of stray bullets. One man who was bleeding profusely in spite of all efforts—the bullet had entered the cranium through his nostril—was put in a room of the Choir School, set aside for those who were likely to die during the night. He came back in the morning and demanded a bed, as he did not “want to stay in that room. nobody but dying men in there.” He was given a bed and was discharged cured in a few days.

That night the Red Cross launch went down to Admiral Sah’s gunboat and brought back a wounded gunner, a fine young man, and a cook’s helper, a little lad, who had a silver dollar in his belt that stopped the bullet which otherwise would have pierced his body. The dollar was not broken but was badly bent, and the lad escaped injury and, save for a bad shaking-up, was more frightened than hurt. The gunner had a very bad wound. A bursting shell had broken both bones of his leg just below the knee and had ploughed up the soft parts pretty well. He was a very sick man for several days, but with careful dressing twice daily, he went off with only large scars to show for his part in the conflict, the joint, fortunately, having escaped injury.

November 1, All Saints Day, the Imperialists fired the city of Hankow. In it the wounded were boxed up in the Wesleyan Hospital and the poor little boys in the David Hill School for the blind.

What a day that was! In our hearts were hope and prayer for their deliverance, coupled with sick horror at the thought of their terror; for the wounded it was awful enough, but for the blind it was an unseen foe. Several attempts were made to rescue them, but twenty-four hours passed before any was successful, then, miracle of miracles, the fire had surrounded them on all sides and had begun to scorch the very walls, when the wind changed and they were saved. On being asked as to their fears, they answered, “We prayed, and we knew that God would save us.” The fire crept—no, swept—down to the London Mission Hospital, so their patients had to be moved. The church was open to all that day and every pew was taken. The grandeur of the sky with its flaming

red on every side—for a Standard Oil tank was burning at the other end—was most awe-inspiring. The old, dirty-smelling native city was majestic in her death, beautiful and grand. The sickening odor of burnt flesh not only filled the air but permeated every corner of the houses, and through all, and over all, and above all were still the shriek of shells and the boom of cannon.

How we all, Chinese and foreign, showed our true selves, and I'm glad to say our best selves, at that time. Business men from the Concession came and offered to go on duty at night in the cathedral; the offer was accepted, too. Clothing, blankets, and steamer rugs were turned in for patients' use. The ladies of the community sewed on the machine all day long, for days at a time, making bedcovers and sheets. Rice, eggs, tea, condensed milk, and box after box of crackers were sent by the Chinese and the grocers. Nobody was too poor to have something to give.

When one Revolutionary regiment turned traitor and betrayed their brethren, the grief of the betrayed was pathetic, and from all sides of the hospital went up a piteous cry, "Chinese fought Chinese, Chinese fought Chinese, alas!" One little ex-patient was all that remained of the Wesleyan nurses. After their rescue they decided to stay rescued and kept clear of us. This youngster we dubbed "The Last of the Mohegans," quoting from "Just Folks." That name stuck to him clear through, nobody, clerical, medical, or lay, ever called him anything else.

Afterward came the fall of Han Yang and its terrors, when boat-loads of men, women, and children came down with the current, mangled, dead, and dying. Once more the cathedral came to the front, not only in the routine care of the wounded, but in succor to the distressed. Those who had not been wounded were plunged into the water, as their boats sank under them riddled with bullets. They gathered in the courtyard, shivering, while we changed their drenched garments for dry ones, gave them hot soup and hot tea, and afterward a hearty meal. The cathedral that night fed one hundred and twelve and housed over ninety wounded.

The Divinity School seniors were our best helpers through all. They acted as nurses, held services daily, carried stretchers, pulled jinrikishas, led the wounded to the hospital, looked after the dying, and with their own hands carried the dead to the funeral pyre. The bodies were all cremated.

Was ever church put to so strange a use, its pews used for hospital beds, its kneeling cushions for pillows, and its transept for laboratory and dressing-room? Was ever church before the scene of seventy-five to one hundred dressings daily? Was ever church more truly the House of God?